DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 393 TM 024 732

TITLE	Cautions on the Use of State Aggregate ACT Scores.
INSTITUTION	American Coll. Testing Program, Iowa City, IA.
PUB DATE	1995-00-00
NOTE	4p.; In: ACT Assessment 1996 Results, Summary Report. National; see ED 405 347.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Achievement Tests; College Bound Students; *College Entrance Examinations; College Preparation; *Core Curriculum; Educational Experience; *High School Seniors; High Schools; National Norms; Scores; *State Norms; Student Characteristics; Test Results; *Test Use
IDENTIFIERS	*ACT Assessment; Composite Scores

ABSTRACT

The American College Testing (ACT) Assessment consists of four curriculum-based achievement tests designed to assess critical reasoning and higher-order thinking skills in English, mathematics, reading, and science. These tests reflect students' skills and achievement levels as products of their high school experience and serve as measures of their preparation for college. The list of average scores presented with this document should not be interpreted as providing grounds for an explicit or implicit ranking of the various states' educational systems. Students who take the ACT Assessment are self-selected and do not represent the entire student population. Many factors contribute to academic achievement, but a core college-preparatory program can be identified as a significant precondition to success on the ACT Assessment. A table gives the following information for each state: (1) percentage of graduates tested; (2) average composite score; (3) percentage of total core completers tested; (4) average composite score of core completers; (5) percentage of total non-core completers tested; (6) average composite score of non-core completers; (7) percentage tested for whom there was no course data; and (8) average composite score of those for whom there was no course data. (SLD)

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Cautions on the Use of State Aggregate ACT Scores

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The ACT Assessment comprises four curriculum-based achievement tests designed to assess critical reasoning and higher-order thinking skills in English, mathematics, reading and science. These tests reflect students' skills and achievement levels as products of their high school experience and serve as critical measures of their preparation for academic coursework beyond high school. ACT Assessment results are used by postsecondary institutions across the nation for admissions, academic advising, course placement and scholarship decisions.

The accompanying list of average scores should not be interpreted as providing grounds for an explicit or implicit ranking of the various states' educational systems. Students who take the ACT Assessment are self-selected and do not represent the entire student population. Further, the percentages of students taking the ACT Assessment vary a great deal from state to state, as do those students' backgrounds and characteristics. Many factors--among them, motivation and the desire to learn, parental support, the quality of teaching, socioeconomic status and extracurricular experiences--contribute to individual and group student achievement. However, a core college-preparatory program can be identified as one significant precondition to success on the ACT Assessment and in postsecondary studies. ACT defines a core college-preparatory program as four years of English and three or more years each of mathematics (starting with Algebra I), science and social studies courses.

For a state with a high percentage of ACT-tested graduates, comparing the percentages and average composite ACT scores of the core and non-core completers reveals, in general, large differences in overall student achievement and postsecondary preparation. For a state with a low percentage of ACT-tested graduates, however, the differences between core and non-core completers are not as definitive.

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ACT Average Composite Scores by State
1995 ACT-Tested Graduates

State	Total		Core Completers		Non-Core Completers		No Course Data	
	% of Graduates Tested	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested	Average Composite Score
Alabama	60	20.0	59	21.3	36	17.7	5	20.6
Alaska	40	21.0	43	24.0	25	20.0	32	17.8
Arizona	29	21.0	63	22.0	35	19.4	3	20.6
Arkansas	63	20.2	56	21.3	29	17.8	15	20.6
California	12	20.9	64	21.8	32	19.0	4	21.2
Colorado	63	21.4	57	22.5	40	19.7	4	21.4
Connecticut	3	21.4	39	21.7	39	20.6	22	22.3
Delaware	4	21.6	66	22.6	29	19.4	5	20.9
Washington DC	5	18.9	63	19.0	30	18.6	7	18.8
Florida	34	20.7	68	21.7	24	17.8	8	20.4
Georgia	18	20.2	75	20.9	18	17.3	7	19.5
Hawaii	14	21.8	61	22.6	31	20.2	8	21.4
Idaho	61	21.2	50	22.4	46	20.0	4	20.2
Illinois	67	21.1	47	22.7	48	19.5	5	21.4
Indiana	22	21.2	52	22.7	44	19.4	5	20.8
Iowa	64	21.8	63	22.9	33	19.7	4	21.9
Kansas	72	21.2	47	23.0	51	19.6	3	21.2
Kentucky	63	20.1	31	21.2	64	19.5	5	20.1
Louisiana	75	19.4	63	20.4	30	17.0	7	20.2
Maine	2	21.5	35	22.2	49	21.2	16	20.7
Maryland	12	20.6	68	21.2	27	19.3	5	20.1
Massachusetts	4	20.9	39	21.2	42	20.7	19	20.8
Michigan	64	21.1	54	22.4	43	19.4	3	21.4
Minnesota	59	21.9	70	22.6	27	20.1	4	21.6
Mississippi	73	18.8	58	19.7	33	16.8	9	19.9
Missouri	64	21.3	50	22.6	41	19.4	10	22.0

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1995 ACT-Tested Graduates

State	Total		Core Completers		Non-Core Completers		No Course Data	
	% of Graduates Tested	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested	Average Composite Score	% of Total Tested	Average Composite Score
Montana	56	21.8	60	23.1	37	19.9	3	20.6
Nebraska	75	21.4	56	22.7	39	19.4	4	21.3
Nevada	42	21.3	62	22.2	35	19.6	3	21.5
New Hampshire	2	22.3	52	23.0	36	21.3	11	22.3
New Jersey	3	20.4	35	20.8	57	20.1	8	20.3
New Mexico	59	20.1	53	21.2	42	18.7	5	19.8
New York	18	21.7	63	23.1	30	19.1	7	21.0
North Carolina	12	19.6	65	20.6	31	17.7	5	18.9
North Dakota	75	21.2	66	22.4	31	18.7	3	21.2
Ohio	59	21.2	59	22.4	37	19.3	4	21.4
Oklahoma	65	20.3	47	21.6	45	18.9	8	21.0
Oregon	14	22.6	63	23.7	34	20.6	3	23.0
Pennsylvania	7	20.6	68	21.4	25	18.9	7	18.7
Rhode Island	2	20.6	49	20.9	47	20.3	4	21.8
South Carolina	14	19.1	70	20.0	25	16.9	6	18.3
South Dakota	68	21.2	59	22.4	39	19.4	2	20.9
Tennessee	68	20.3	58	21.4	37	18.6	6	20.6
Texas	33	20.1	65	21.2	31	17.9	4	19.3
Utah	67	21.4	39	22.5	57	20.6	4	21.1
Vermont	4	21.7	47	23.1	33	20.9	20	20.0
Virginia	6	20.6	62	21.4	30	19.4	8	19.3
Washington	17	22.2	57	23.1	41	21.0	2	21.9
West Virginia	56	20.0	44	21.2	54	19.0	3	19.9
Wisconsin	64	22.0	59	22.9	38	20.7	3	21.7
Wyoming	66	21.3	51	22.5	45	20.0	4	21.0
National	**37**	**20.8**	**56**	**22.0**	**38**	**19.1**	**6**	**20.7**

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